

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

Third Parliament—Third Session.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
Thursday, Feb. 21.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

Prayers were read by Rev. J. A. R. Dickson (Congregationalist).

PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:—

By Mr. Clarke (Norfolk)—Of the County Council of Norfolk, and of Levi Lewis, *et al.*, of Townsend, praying for certain amendments to the Act incorporating the Canada Southern Railway Company.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. MOSTYN presented the report of the Committee on the Bills respecting the protection of insectivorous birds and of fur-bearing animals.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

Mr. WILSON introduced a Bill to amend the Railway Acts of Ontario.

Mr. MACDOUGALL introduced a Bill respecting Mutual Life Insurance Companies. He stated that an Act was passed by the Dominion Parliament last session respecting fire and life insurance companies, one of the provisions of which required foreign mutual life companies doing business in Canada to increase their deposits with the Receiver-General made by authority of the law of 1868. It was pointed out by a very respectable minority that the Dominion Legislature was interfering with the local and civil rights of the people of the different Provinces, and that, therefore, the law was *ultra vires*. It was pointed out further that the enforcement of such a measure would be equivalent to driving these foreign companies out of the country, and some of them had already given notice of their intention to retire from Canada. English and American companies had now about forty million dollars worth of risks in this country. He thought, therefore, that the Legislature should permit these foreign mutual companies to avail themselves of the local law, and take out a license to enable them to do business here, and that was the object of this Bill. He should like to see the jurisdiction of the Provincial and Dominion Legislatures well defined, and he thought the Government would do wisely if they carried, as they were considering the advisability of doing, the question relating to brewers' licenses to the Supreme Court for final adjudication.

THIRD READINGS.

The following Bills were read the third time and passed:—

To incorporate the Whitby and Bobcaygeon Extension Railway Company.—Mr. Wilson.

To preserve the forests from destruction by fire.—Mr. Pardee.

TILE DRAINING.

Mr. WOOD moved "That the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may from time to time, in his discretion, invest any surplus of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, not exceeding in the whole at any one time the sum of two hundred thousand dollars, in the purchase of municipal debentures issued under by-laws for tile drainage purposes in respect of which the Commissioner of Agriculture shall certify to the propriety of investment." He said that the Ontario Legislature had been spending large sums of money in developing the newer portions of the Province by means of colonization roads, railways, etc. and all parties had entirely approved of this expenditure. But it was considered advisable also to do something towards the further development of the older sections of the Province, and there was no part of Ontario so well cultivated but that its cultivation might be greatly improved. The Government, therefore, asked that the sum of \$200,000 might be set apart for the purpose of assisting farmers in tile draining their land. It was proposed that Township Councils might pass by-laws for the purpose of borrowing from that fund any sum not exceeding \$15,000 and not less than \$5,000, and that a copy of any such by-law should be sent to the Commissioner of Agriculture to be filed. At the time any municipality passed a by-law for the borrowing of money they might issue debentures in sums of \$100 each, payable within 20 years from the date of issue, and bearing interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum. Coupons should be attached to these debentures, each of them being for \$8, which should represent the sum equal to the annual interest of the debenture and the sinking fund necessary to repay the debentures in twenty years. It was proposed also to give to municipalities a form of by-law setting forth exactly what they were to do, and containing the provisions necessary for levying the rate. Any person wishing to borrow money for the purpose of tile draining his land would be required to make application to the Council of the municipality in which he resided, and in the application to state that he was the owner of the land, to state also the lot, concession, the amount of money he wished to borrow, the quantity of drain he proposed to construct, the depth, and the proposed size of the tile. Township Councils should have power to pass a resolution instructing the Reeve to issue debentures. It was further proposed that the Council should appoint an inspector, whose duty it should be to report particulars concerning the drain when completed, and to keep whatever record the Council might require. It was not proposed, as in a former Drainage Bill, to allow any progress estimates on the completion of the drain, and not before the money should be paid. The object in putting the debentures at \$100 and the coupons at \$8 was to make the system as clear and simple as possible; it was to be surrounded by no unnecessary machinery.

Mr. MACDOUGALL (Simcoe) said that he thought that the Government was by this Bill going to interfere with private business, which should be as free as possible. The Government was going to enter into competition with loan companies, and just now there is no lack of capital for honest enterprise. The Government had no money to loan in that way if it kept pace with the increasing expenditure. Besides, it was opening the door for political influence being injudiciously used. He took issue with hon. gentlemen upon the necessity of tile drainage. Tile draining was applicable only to a limited portion of the country. He had come to the conclusion that unless a farmer knew how it operated it was dangerous to induce him to have tile drainage on his land. He thought that if the farmers wanted to try the change they could easily get the money privately to make an experiment. He apprehended trouble with the farmers in getting repaid principal or interest. Besides, the conditions were different here from in England where labour was at its lowest and prices highest; while in Canada labour was at its highest, and prices at the lowest. Tile draining in Canada had not been nearly as successful as it had been in England, and had not warranted the expenditure by the results. He advised the Hon. Attorney-General to take care with this Bill and not to press it. It would be time enough to proceed when they had received a consensus of agricultural opinion.

Mr. GRAHAM said the hon. member for South Simcoe had tried tile drainage, but it had not been a success, because it had not been properly done, as he (the speaker) happened to know. He contended that tile draining is a success, and he knew it to be a success in his own case. No bonus or grant was asked; it was merely a loan, and if the Bill was passed it would be the Bill of the session.

Mr. SCOTT said that if the Bill were passed it would be the Bill not only of this but of many sessions. It was the first time the Government had adopted the plan of lending out the surplus to private individuals. Admitting that tile drainage was of advantage to the country, the Bill contained many objectionable features, and altogether he thought it better merely to discuss it now and hear the voice of the country upon it before enacting it as law. It was re-enacting the old municipal loan plan. He could not see how a farmer if he wanted money to tile drain his farm could not get it on better terms than by applying through the township for Government money. Why did not the Government say that the farmer should have improved barns, houses, fences, and stock, and offer to advance the money to him? Besides, this money-lending privilege might be used for election purposes. With these twenty years' debentures on the farm, a purchaser of a farm might find his purchase practically mortgaged.

Mr. PARDEE said that the intention was to allow municipalities by a by-law to borrow a sum not exceeding \$15,000 and not less than \$5,000. The Bill will provide that an individual may borrow from the municipality and the municipality will have the power to levy a rate on the farm. Mr. Carling introduced a Bill on the same principle, and that was passed by the Sandfield Macdonald Government. Besides, this Government passed a Bill for the drainage of municipalities, and on this there were between four and six hundred thousand dollars on loan. The hon. member for South Simcoe had urged tile draining when he was conducting an agricultural paper. His own experience, gained from speaking with farmers, was that tile draining did do great good. At the late meeting of the Dominion Grange those assembled were unanimous in urging the Government to prepare a scheme for under-drainage. With surpluses, the Government would be derelict in their duty did they not try to increase the productiveness of the country. It would increase the value of the farm tenfold what it would cost.

Mr. HAY said as a farmer that what underlay the improvement of farming was this question of tile drainage. Three-fourths of the counties of Ontario require under-drainage. Five bushels per acre or twenty-five per cent. was a small per centage of permanent improvement on land that had been under-drained. He was surprised at the hon. member for South Simcoe talking of rolling land requiring no tile drainage. Why, that was the land which required it most. Under-drainage ventilated the land and enabled it to retain the under-drainage. The older counties are running out from want of this. The farmers, he contended, are wanting under-drainage. Not only is the yield by under-drainage increased, but the liability to failure is decreased. If private funds could be got as cheap as Government, he would be in favour of having private funds. This, however, could not be got; and besides, most farms were under mortgage, and it was not desirable to borrow again on them. So far as the twenty years' mortgage—as the debentures had been called—were concerned, he supposed the hon. Treasurer would see that if a man wanted to pay off his loan in five years he would be allowed to do so. His own experience was that his under-drainage had almost paid him the entire cost in the first year. The foundation of the prosperity of the farming of today lay in under-drainage.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that if Government was going to give aid to farmers on old lands to under-drain, they should give like advantages to farmers whose lands are filled up with stones, or in which impediments to culture existed.

Mr. ROSEVEAR said, as a farmer, he believed in drainage, but thought the farmers could do their own drainage. The Government had been rather liberal in helping people with money. In the by-gone days, when there were plenty of stumps, under-drainage was not required, but now it was. He would vote against this "feeler" of the Government, which he thought was meant to coax the farmers.

Mr. PAXTON was of opinion that the sum of \$200,000 proposed to be lent to the farmers was entirely insufficient for the purpose. It cost from \$50 to \$100 per acre to under-drain land properly. If \$15,000 were granted to the farmers of a township, that would enable 15 farmers, supposing that the drainage cost \$50 per acre, to drain 20 acres each. If the drainage cost \$100 an acre they would only be